



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
Patent and Trademark Office

Address: COMMISSIONER OF PATENTS AND TRADEMARKS
Washington, D.C. 20231

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.
-----------------	-------------	----------------------	---------------------

09/371,776 08/10/99 CAMPBELL

D TRW(VSSIM)42

EXAMINER

PM82/1106

TAROLLI SUNDHEIM COVELL
TUMMINO & SZABO LLP
1111 LEADER BLDG
526 SUPERIOR AVENUE
CLEVELAND OH 44114-1400

DUNN D

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

3611

DATE MAILED:

11/06/01

13

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks

Office Action Summary	Application No. 09/371,776	Applicant(s) Campbell et al.
	Examiner David Dunn	Art Unit 3611
		

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136 (a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on Sep 4, 2001
- 2a) This action is FINAL. 2b) This action is non-final.
- 3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11; 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) Claim(s) 1-21 and 23-36 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above, claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) Claim(s) 31 and 36 is/are allowed.
- 6) Claim(s) 1, 3, 6, 7, 9, 10, 12, 15, 17-21, 23, and 26-28 is/are rejected.
- 7) Claim(s) 2, 4, 5, 8, 11, 13, 14, 16, 24, 25, 29, 30, and 32-35 is/are objected to.
- 8) Claims _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are objected to by the Examiner.
- 11) The proposed drawing correction filed on _____ is: a) approved b) disapproved.
- 12) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 13) Acknowledgement is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d).

a) All b) Some* c) None of:

1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

*See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

- 14) Acknowledgement is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e).

Attachment(s)

- 15) Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) 18) Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). _____
- 16) Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) 19) Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 17) Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s). _____ 20) Other: _____

Art Unit: 3611

DETAILED ACTION

Request for Continued Examination

1. A request for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, including the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e), was filed in this application after final rejection. Since this application is eligible for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, and the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e) has been timely paid, the finality of the previous Office action has been withdrawn pursuant to 37 CFR 1.114. Applicant's submission filed on 9/4/01 has been entered.

In the amendment filed 9/4/01, new claims 32-36 were added.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

2. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless --

(e) the invention was described in a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention thereof by the applicant for patent, or on an international application by another who has fulfilled the requirements of paragraphs (1), (2), and (4) of section 371(c) of this title before the invention thereof by the applicant for patent.

3. Claims 18 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Kokeguchi (6,231,078).

Kokeguchi shows an apparatus for helping to protect an occupant of a vehicle that has a side structure, said apparatus comprising: an inflatable vehicle occupant protection device that is

Art Unit: 3611

inflatable into a position between the side structure of the vehicle and a vehicle occupant ("side air bag", see column 2, lines 1-5); and an inflator (Figure 1) for inflating said inflatable vehicle occupant protection device and for maintaining said inflatable vehicle occupant protection device in an inflated condition for at least seven seconds (column 2, lines 1-5), said inflator containing a stored inflation fluid under pressure, said inflation fluid consisting essentially of helium (see column 5, line 10). Kokeguchi also shows a container (2) for storing inflation fluid; a rupturable closure member (5, 6); and an initiator (10), which when actuated, causes the closure member to rupture to allow inflation fluid to flow through the passage.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

4. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

5. Claims 1, 3, 6, 7, 9, 26, and 27 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Day (3,648,898) in view of Popek (5,242,194).

Day discloses an apparatus for providing inflation fluid to inflate an inflatable vehicle occupant protection device, said apparatus comprising: a container (10) storing inflation fluid under pressure, said container having an outlet passage (through 12); a rupturable closure member (16) fixed to said container (fixed to 14 by 18 and 20) and blocking flow of inflation fluid through

Art Unit: 3611

said passage; a support (18) for said rupturable closure member defining a chamber adjacent said rupturable closure member; said rupturable closure member having a first portion (center portion of 16) deformed into the opening by the pressure of the inflation fluid (inherent is deformed to some degree due to pressure) and a second ring-shaped portion (outer portion of 16) encircling said first portion; and an initiator which, when activated, ruptures the closure member (32). With respect to claim 6, the initiator (32) extends into the hollow member (when activated). With respect to claim 7, it is inherent that the closure member is work hardened due to plastic deformation (see domed shape); also with respect to this claim, Day shows the same final product, and the method step is not germane to the patentability of the apparatus claim. The support (18) includes a circular rim defining an opening into the chamber, the rim having a surface engaging the disk. The circular rim (of 18) defines a periphery of the first portion where the closure member engages the rim and the first portion extends into the chamber through the opening.

Day fails to show the closure member rupturing by shearing the first portion from the second portion.

Popek teaches an inflator with a rupturable closer member (52) with an initiator (140) which ruptures the closure member by shearing the first portion (196; see Figure 4) from the second portion (88). Note that Popek also shows the rupture disk deformed outward of the inflation chamber.

Art Unit: 3611

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify Day with the teachings of Popek in order to provide a simplified striker to open the burst disk.

6. Claims 10, 12, 15 and 17 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Day in view of Popek as applied to claim 1 above, and further in view of Yamaji et al. (6,056,316).

The combination of Day and Popek is discussed above and fails to show the airbag maintained inflated for at least seven seconds.

Yamaji et al. teaches a side air bag that has a low permeability and is able to remain inflated for about 5 seconds (see column 4, lines 59-64).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the combination of Day and Popek with the teachings of Yamaji et al. in order to use the inflator on a side air bag to further protect the occupant. As Yamaji teaches keeping the airbag inflated for several seconds, it would have been obvious to provide an airbag that could stay inflated for seven seconds by changing the size of the airbag, amount of inflation gas, or decreasing the permeability of the airbag.

7. Claims 19 and 20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kokeguchi in view of Hamilton (6,145,867).

Kokeguchi is discussed above and fails to show a fill tube.

Art Unit: 3611

Hamilton shows a fill tube (outer tube 96) located in the inflatable device. Hamilton also shows a container (174; Figure 10) for storing inflation fluid ; a rupturable closure member (234); and an initiator (142), which when actuated, causes the closure member to rupture (with 230) to allow inflation fluid to flow through the passage.

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify Kokeguchi with the teachings of Hamilton in order to provide a connection from the inflator to the airbag.

8. Claim 21 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kokeguchi in view of Hamilton and in further view of Day.

The combination of Kokeguchi and Hamilton is discussed above and fails to show a support for supporting the closure member.

As discussed above, Day teaches a support member (18) for supporting a rupture member.

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the combination of Kokeguchi and Hamilton with the teachings of Day in order to provide additional support to better hold the rupture member.

9. Claims 10, 12, 15, 23, and 28 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Day in view of Popek as applied to claim 1 above, and further in view of Lewis (6,142,508).

The combination of Day and Popek is discussed above and fails to show the inflation fluid consisting essentially of helium.

Art Unit: 3611

Lewis teaches a side air bag in which the inflation fluid consists essentially of helium (see column 7, lines 18-21).

It would been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the combination of Day and Popek with the teachings of Yamaji et al. in order to use the inflator on a side air bag to further protect the occupant and in order to provide the use of an inert gas in order to limit any chemical reactions that may occur in a crash.

Allowable Subject Matter

10. Claims 2, 4, 5, 8, 11, 13, 14, 16, 24, 25, 29, 30, and 32-35 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

11. Claims 31 and 36 are allowed.

Response to Arguments

12. Applicant's arguments filed 9/4/01 have been fully considered and are addressed below.

On pages 5-6, Applicant argues the rejections of claims 1 and 10. It is maintained that the closure members of Day and Popek are deformed to at least a certain degree due to the pressure of the gas. The pressure of the gas pushes on the closure member and therefore the closure member is inherently deformed to at least a certain degree. It is noted that when applicant more clearly defines the closure member as in claim 36, it is allowable over the prior art.

Art Unit: 3611

The arguments regarding claim 18 are noted but are now moot in view of the new rejection.

Conclusion

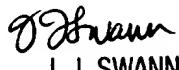
13. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to David Dunn whose telephone number is (703) 305-0049. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday from 9:00 AM to 5:30 PM.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, J. J. Swann, can be reached on (703) 306-4115. The fax phone number for this Group is (703) 305-7687.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the Group receptionist whose telephone number is (703) 308-1113.



DAVID R. DUNN
PATENT EXAMINER



J. J. SWANN
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER
TECHNOLOGY CENTER 3600